



#5 In the Worth it Series

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GRACE

Forest Park Church

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John 8:1-11

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But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

You may notice in your Bible a note that John 8 is not found in the oldest manuscripts. This is because, in the oldest manuscripts, sometimes this story shows up in John, sometimes in Luke, sometimes not at all. The consensus is that this story was probably not written by John, but that it is an authentic story of Jesus, and so for our purposes it still works for us today as we seek to learn how to love like Him.

Though the story reads like modern soap opera

- Immoral activities in which the affluent or privileged escape while the less fortunate are punished



- (Remember she was caught in the act, but only the woman was brought to judgment),
- At the core of this incredible story is what happens when a sinner is placed at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This is the place where every person who calls themselves a follower of Christ has been and needs to go often.
- It is also the place where every person must go in order to experience the incredible promise of eternal life.

A QUICK RECAP:

Jesus is teaching in the temple courts, and the teachers of the law and the Pharisees, the religious leaders, set a trap for Jesus because they want to be able to discredit him as a man of God.

- This is their plan – they bring to him a woman caught in the act of adultery. “Caught in the act of adultery” is exactly as it sounds - in order to convict someone of adultery, two witnesses would have to actually see the sex act happen and agree with each other on their interpretation of what happened.
- As you can imagine, this almost never happened.
- Almost surely, this is a setup.
- Furthermore, notice what the law says, in Leviticus 20:10 - 'If a man commits adultery with another man's wife-- with the wife of his neighbor-- both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.
- But of course, in this account, only the woman is brought before Jesus.

Jesus is being set up by the religious leaders, with this woman as the unfortunate pawn.

Imagine that someone you loved – your sister, your friend, your daughter – was in her place.

- Imagine that you were in her place.
- In the act of adultery,



- an angry mob of religious men storm into your bedroom to drag you from the bed, take you to the Temple, and make you stand before a Jesus Christ and a crowd of people there to have church.
- Ashamed, you look at the ground as the shocked crowd looks at you humiliated and without excuse.

And here is the dilemma – will Jesus respect the law and have her stoned? Or will he pardon her, let her off the hook, and so dishonor and disobey the law of Moses?

- He seemingly can't have it both ways.
- If he has the woman executed, all of his talk about compassion, about the weak and lowly coming to him, will go right out the window.

“Come to me all you who are weary, and I will have you stoned?”

But if he lets her go,

- What kind of teacher is he, picking and choosing which laws to follow?
- After all, she did commit adultery, and according to the law, she does deserve to die.

This dilemma is a common dilemma for churches and for Christians, for the two options seem to be in contradiction.

- Either you can uphold the law, uphold morality, and potentially trample on people as a result,
- or you can be compassionate, not make a big deal out of sin, and trample on the law.
- How can you show both justice and mercy? How can you neither encourage sin nor condemn the sinner?

Let's consider the genius of how Jesus handles this, and how we can learn to love like Him.

From Jesus' reaction to this scenario, we learn several things



3 I. Judge yourself before you judge anyone else.

The hypocritical religious leaders who brought this woman to be judged did not judge themselves.

- They did not care about their likely setting her up for the trap, watching her in the act, or dragging her into a public mob for what should have been a private matter.

4 **Matthew 7**

“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. 3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”

Self-righteousness is a sin that plagues many of us.

- Often the self-righteous person is oblivious to their own sin.
- Everyone around them knows they are self-righteous.

Jesus illustrates this in a way that it would be comical if it were not so true to life.

Jesus makes his point with great clarity.

if you are constantly noticing the flaws and failings of those around you, you are most likely ignoring the destruction being caused by your own sin.

- Stop and use the mirror of Scripture to look for the planks bulging out from your eye.
- Once you remove those, you may find that people will welcome your offer to help them with their specks.

5 II. Put down your rock.

The religious leaders wanted to have this woman stoned to death for her sin.

- But, Jesus made them put their rock down because He alone is without sin and qualified to throw any stones.

The greatest shows on Earth is a book written about the history of the circus especially in the early days when it traveled to small towns by train.

- The author described in detail the unofficial hierarchy of the traveling circus.
- From the ring master through various performers down to the roadies who set up the tents, everyone knew their place on the food chain.
- Even the freak show performers or side show acts created a system of evaluating their peers.
- The three legged man out ranked the bearded woman who trumped the man with crab claw hands.

You don't have to join the circus to experience the cutting edge of judgment.

James 4:11-12

- 6 *Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you-- who are you to judge your neighbor?*

“It is the Holy Spirit’s job to convict, God’s job to judge, and our job to love.”

7 III. Jesus paid our price.



Jesus could have put the woman to death, but instead He forgave her and took her place on the cross to die for her sin.

- Jesus forgives sin. While we tend to deny our sin, diminish our sin, or blame others for our sin Jesus simply forgives it.
- Jesus lifts condemnation. Jesus tells this woman that He does not condemn her. Like her, you can live without condemnation for your past sin because as

8 **Romans 8:1**
“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

9 IV. Jesus gives dignity.

And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

Not only does Jesus forgive her, but he calls the adulterous lady “woman” as he had referred to His mother Mary earlier in John 2:4.

Last week we talked about another outcast.

- There was Zacchaeus — a guilt-laden outcast, dangling from his last shred of dignity above an uncaring crowd.
- And there was Jesus, a miracle-working prophet, pausing beneath the tree, looking up and locking eyes with Zacchaeus.
- When Jesus noticed Zacchaeus, called him down from the tree and went to be a guest in his home, Jesus was pushing against societal norms and demonstrating that Zacchaeus mattered. Zacchaeus wasn’t the sum of his failures, sins or reputation.



Jesus knew that to help people, he first had to acknowledge their value. They needed to know that he saw beyond their labels and circumstances to their priceless humanity.

- Jesus noticed people not just to prove a point or stand against the cultural establishment,
- but because he genuinely cared.
- His simple acknowledgement of their personhood invited us into a level of dignity denied sometimes denied us by society.

Jesus didn't require them to clean up their messes before he would look at them; instead, his attention drew them toward wholeness.

10 V. It will be just be you and Jesus.

As the religious leaders walked away from the scandalous scene, all that was left was Jesus and the woman.

- So it will be for every one of us sinners at the end of time.

II Corinthians 5:9-10

12 *So we aspire to please Him, whether we are here in this body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive his due for the things done in the body, whether good or bad.*

13 VI. We are Free to go and sin no more

She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

– **John 8:9b-11**

That is the gospel.

- Love and grace first,

- Then a call to holiness, to total surrender to Jesus and His Word.

But it starts with grace.

- It begins with love.
- It starts with a welcome, an invitation, acceptance, and care.

Jesus died for us when we were still sinners. In the same way, all are welcome in Christ's church, as we are Christ calls us to not stay that way!!

Romans 6:1

14

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Conclusion:

It is also noteworthy to see again how often we find in the gospels that the moral people didn't like Jesus, but the sinners did.

- In fact, this chapter ends with the Pharisees wanting to stone Jesus.

To Jesus all were welcome, and they were shown such love and grace that they wanted to follow him and be like him.

We would be wise to ask ourselves if we have the same effect on the irreligious as Jesus did.

"Jesus' teaching consistently attracted the irreligious while offending the Bible-believing, religious people of His day.



I would suspect that Jesus was far more full of love and mercy than we tend to be.

